REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PS-#1175
PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM MODERNIZATION

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE CALL

April 26, 2012

1. Question: In the RFP you mention you have the VSAM data using in house data compression. Can there be a little more additional information given about this? Is that [for example] the field indicator and the file with …a variable length record sort of embedded using custom meanings, or can you provide more information about that?

   Answer: This is JJ Johnson, one of the software engineers. What the in-house compressed does is the key is not compressed, it is the data that is compressed, and what it does is remove the spaces that are in the data. We have a control that is used by an in-house module that determines where the compression starts and what position in the record. All the records are variable lengths of course because the records can have different amounts of spaces in them.

2. Question: Is it the intention of SLO to migrate this entire application as-is and lift-and-shift it over to a distributed platform?

   Answer: Yes it is.

3. Question: After this migration will there be any ViaSQL clients left in COBOL that are using that?

   Answer: There won't be in the Property Tax System. We will still have ViaSQL on our mainframe.

4. Question: How many developers are you looking to support for the migration?

   Answer: There will be a minimum of 4 developers, and there could be more. Use a range of 4 to 6 developers.

5. Question: On page 28 of the RFP, item number 32, the Cost Proposal, it mentions pricing and turnkey implementation including hardware. I didn't see a place on the Appendix B, Cost Proposal template for hardware. There is a place called 'Other'. Is that where you'd like to have that quoted?

   Answer: The County does have virtual servers that we intend to place this solution and run this solution on, so we're not looking for servers to be quoted, but if there is any hardware

that you need to quote maybe such as alternate printers, things like that, then yes you will want to use the 'Other' category. There is also the Requirements Matrix, Appendix D, [RFP Property Tax System Modernization Requirements Response Form], and there is a section [named] Hardware/Software Platform and those questions being asked [may also refer to] alternate hardware and any hardware you are suggesting under that section may also go under 'Other'.

6. Question: In I believe Appendix A, the Technical Metrics (correction: Appendix D, Inventory and Metrics), you have a line called File I/O modules. Unlike all the other entries, there are no lines of code or language associated with that. Could you just explain a bit more [about this]. Is this associated with compression routines, or why is it not fully spelled out in the metrics?

   Clarification: the line for File I/O modules says 748 bytes which suggests that these are binary and there is no source code for them.

   Answer: Exactly. We use an exec to generate the I/O modules, and it simply consists of a set of parameters that the exec uses, and they're actually in assembly code but there is no source code. So yes there is no source code, but we can generate source code.
   Answer from vendor: OK, I think I understand.

   Clarification from County: The exec we have is called IOMOD and we have a set of parameters that give information for the file, [such as] the file name, whether it's a VSAM, sequential, tape, the record size, the blocking factor, the name of the I/O module, and we feed that into this exec called IOMOD, and it generates an assembly code executable in the library.

   Clarification from Vendor: I see, but you do own the source code for the exec, right?

   Answer from County: yes, it was developed in house.

7. Question: On the data cleansing, are you planning to have agency staff participate in the data cleansing, and to what extent?

   Answer: Yes, we [County] would be involved in that because we'd need to determine if the cleansing that was done would work with the existing source code, or if we need to make changes to the source code.

8. Question: FAQS PCS Schedules: do you have a count for the number of those that need to be converted, as well as the manual submitted jobs?

   Answer from County: We don't at this point but can gather than information. You're talking about our current scheduler that we use, the PCS scheduler?

   Vendor clarification: Right.

   Follow up from County: So you'd like a count of the number of [PCS] Schedules, and the manual schedules (daily, weekly, monthly?) There's also manual schedules that we've requested. We can identify those as well. Oh that's here. In the inventory metrics, there's an

item called JCL. That includes both the manual and automated [schedules] The total number is 669 found on page 53 of the RFP.

Customer clarification: Right, but that does not describe the [number of] schedules that are defined in FAQS PCS.

Follow up from County: No it does not.

Clarification from vendor: Part of the requirements is to convert FAQS PCS Schedules to another Schedule package on the target platform.

Answer from County: Right We need to do a count of those.

Follow-up Answer: The numbers are FAQS PCS schedules: 112, Manual Schedules: 248.

9. Question: Do all of your file accesses go through these assembler or these generated file access modules and also the database accesses?

   Answer: For VSAM and sequentials the access goes through the I/O modules if its in batch. If it is in CICS, that is a different methodology. Some of the systems have I/O mods for tables, DB2 tables, and some of them do embedded SQL.

10. Question: Could you give us an idea of the available SLO project team size and the roles they're available for?

   Answer: We have a project team that is identifying the vendor right now and then the project team that will be part of the implementation project has been identified but what I'll do is I'll put that in the answers that I post on the website for specific roles and numbers of people. I can't say that all the roles have necessarily been defined at this point but we do have numbers that we can list. So I'll put that as an answer on the website because I can try to do it from memory but don't want to be wrong, so I'll post that answer.

   Follow-up Answer: The RFP PS-#1175 page 26, item #23a asks for the vendor to list the skillsets required of County staff. Item #21 requires the vendor to provide a Project Timeline. It is anticipated that the vendors will clarify resource needs through this detailed Project Timeline.

   The County expects to provide the following skillsets for this project. The actual team size depends largely on the staffing needs expressed by the vendor.

   Subject Matter Experts:
   Treasurer-Tax Collector-Public Administrator's Office
   Assessor's Office
   Auditor/Controller's Office

   Technical Team:

   The technical team will likely contain the following skillsets:

a. **Project Manager**
b. **Mainframe Computer System Technicians**
c. **IT Security Specialist**
d. **Blade center System Administrators**
e. **Network Engineers**
f. **Service Desk Department Automation Specialist**
g. **Property Tax Software Engineers**
h. **Database and Software Engineers**
i. **Microsoft Computing Environment Software Engineers**

11. Question: on the internal utility you mentioned for file I/O generation, what is that written in?

    Answer: We'll need to find that out for you. We'll post that answer in the [pre-proposal conference call transcript Q&A] on the website.

    Updated with Answer: The internal utility that generates VSAM, sequential and partition work file I/O modules is written in REXX. These I/O modules are used by Batch COBOL programs only.

12. Question: My question is a bit more generic. Are you guys looking to migrate to an emulation on the target platform while you're maintaining your CICS and your infrastructure on the IBM and just running it on an emulation of Windows, or are you looking to migrate to a .NET native implementation?

    Clarifying question from County: What do you mean by native .NET?

    Vendor clarification: Is the intent to move to a Windows .NET implementation so where your database is SQL, your interface to the database is ODBC or [inaudible – another?] .NET, you're running the front end through IIS with webforms which are managed to look like the original but you're fundamentally a Windows implementation with no CICS involvement or IBM process involvement.

    Clarifying question from County: Because we know there are several different steps you can go through as far as how you're going to do your screens or your modernization. Is what you're talking about [that] you're actually changing the GUI or presentation, or is the presentation [going to] look like the mainframe even though the underlying may be different.

    Vendor clarification:: Yes exactly. Basically you can take your BMS maps and convert them into web forms and service them through the web browser on the client into an IIS web server on the central system and that web form can look like exactly the screens you have currently in the green screen on the IBM, but the foundation for the actual application is now completely native Windows. Its an [inaudible] of Visual Studio, it is a visual COBOL implementation, it is a direct access into the SQL server back end. There's no old skill set like CICS or VSAM or whatever else you have on the IBM. Or the other option is you can actually take all your IBM components and run them through emulators so you can make the windows essentially look like an IBM to the application [inaudible] so it's essentially called a lift and shift.

Clarification from County: Yes, that's the first step, that's the first stage, and what you're talking about is the next stage.

Clarification from Vendor: I apologize, no, I wasn't talking about it being two stages. Our process is to go straight to what you call the second stage.

Answer from County: OK. Yes, we're open to that, absolutely.

13. Question: In the RFP there was a reference to a count of TB blocks, and later on in the application you were identifying one of your sub-pieces and one of your sub-pieces was called TB. I was just wondering if you could… I wasn't familiar with the TB block and I wasn't sure if I was just missing the nomenclature or that was just associated with a specific application internally.

    Clarification from County: We're on page 9 of the RFP in the Table 3, is that what you're talking about?

    Vendor clarification: I believe that sounds right.

    Clarification from County: So this is for the pilot phase. And your question about that again [is]?

    Follow on from Vendor: So fundamentally when you say TB blocks, what does that mean? What are TB blocks? Is that something more general, is that something specific, is that part of the TB application?

    Answer from County: In general throughout our whole system we'll have different blocks defined with different names beginning. They're kind of like copyblocks. Copy, includes; they're just copy data. And this particular application is called TB.

14. Question: To what extent will the migrated application need to communicate back to the mainframe?

    Answer: None. No communication whatsoever.

15. Question: I'd like to clarify the answer to Rob's question where he asked about developers and you mentioned between 4 and 6. Is that the team that maintains the application after it is converted or is that the [number] of people you're allocating during the conversion? I was looking for how many people actually maintain this application full time.

    Answer: At present there are 4 people that maintain the system. And there is a plan for 4 people to maintain it after it is migrated, modernized.

16. Question:: Are you open to modernizing your VSE JCL to be more like z/OS?

    Answer from County: Probably not. z/OS is like MVS. Where would that apply? I guess my question be would a JCL that is like MVS run on a Windows server?

Clarification from vendor: For us it would.

Answer from County: We're trying to remain open to all solutions, so we want to see anything that you can offer that responds to what we need. We're trying not to close out any solutions.

Clarification from vendor: Yes for us that would be the better of the solutions.

Answer from County: So please then propose that, thank you.

17. Question: The answer to data cleansing. In that answer was something about modifying the code to accommodate the data cleansing. I guess the question I've raised is are we talking about cleansing the data before the migration, or after? Something about that suggests you want to do the data cleansing as an initial sort of fore-runner, and then do the migration, because the lady was talking about migrating code to accommodate it which I think it would mean code on the mainframe, I'm not sure though. Can you clarify what was meant?

    Answer: We'll discuss that question, it's a good question, and we'll provide the answer in the written responses [of questions and answers] that we post online.

    Follow-up answer: This question is similar to question number 29 posted in the Q&A on the County's purchasing website. The County does not plan to perform any data cleansing prior to the migration. Any data cleansing during the migration may depend in part on the destination platform. See pages 22-23, items #5 - #9 and pages 24-25, item #17 of the RFP PS-#1175 for the County's requirements for an overview of the vendor's approach to data

18. Question: In CA over the past decade there have been a variety of attempts at the Counties at various levels to modernize, change the Property Tax System through either complete custom builds or product implementations of which you're doing here and so I'm sure you've been studying the other Counties and maybe you could give a little insight perhaps on sort of why you chose this direction? And then I'm assuming through the research you've done, you probably have a reasonable timeline [in which] you expect this to be completed. Could you share a bit of that with us?

    Answer: What I'll do is write up a brief summary of how we got here. There were several studies done and basically this approach was decided to be the best approach for the County. At one point we did [release] an RFP to go out and define requirements for a new system and the [proposed] cost was prohibitive to the point where we felt that this [modernization] approach would be very cost effective. So that's the very short answer. I can elaborate a bit in the written posted [pre-proposal call transcript] Q&A. You had a follow-on piece to that?

    Follow-up Answer: To start with please see the background information provided in the RFP on page 16, paragraph 4 of section IV, Project Scope – Overview. The County arrived at the decision to modernize rather than replace the system with a new one based on the high costs to define the requirements for a new system as an outcome of an RFP process (see the Answer above to this question), let alone the costs to develop and implement this new system. Modernization was seen as a more cost effective approach.

Vendor clarification: Your expected timeline. We've seen some of these projects go on for ever and never get done for some of these Counties, and we've seen others complete within a one-year, two-year or three-year cycle, so I was just trying to get a sense of what is the expectation from your team?

Answer from County: Budgetary [and] time-wise [our timing is anticipated to be] two to two and a half years at most once we begin the project. The property tax cycle really is an 18 month cycle, but we don't have to test, [and] don't intend to test, all the way through that 18 month cycle per se. We're identifying the high risk business processes [in order] to test those, and we are looking for approaches as stated in the RFP for [a] suggested approach for testing. So if we can shorten that up in some way we're open to it, but we certainly don't want to be doing this forever either.

19. Question: Can you tell us a little bit more about your 70 assembler programs? Are they all file I/O modules or what other functions might they support?

    Answer: There are a number of different assembler language programs and they are in the system utilities. They do a variety of different things. Our in-house compression is an assembler language module. We would actually need to look at all of them to identify exactly what each of them does. I don't have that knowledge right off the top of my head.

    Clarifying question from vendor: Are the regenerated file I/O's included in that number?

    Answer from County: No they're not. The actual assembler language programs that have source code, if you look at Appendix D page 52, the quantity listed there is 70 programs. And no it does not include the file I/O modules in that count. The assembler language programs are not included in the file I/O modules.

    Clarifying question from vendor: They're system utility programs?

    Answer from County: Yes they are.

20. Question: From a pricing perspective, it looks like you might be preferring a time and materials with a not to exceed amount as compare to a fixed bid. Can you comment on that please?

    Answer: Yes, the intent is really to understand the amount of work that is required by the vendor and therefore a not to exceed bid has been requested. I'm not sure if that answers your question?

    Clarifying question from vendor: Yes, I guess, either way then if the fixed bid is a not to exceed versus just giving just hourly costs and then say not to exceed a certain amount, will that suffice?

    Clarifying question from County: If you could restate that [question] please? Are you asking if we are open to simply a fixed bid?

    Answer from vendor: Yes.

Answer from County: I will have to go back and review that. I want to review the language in the RFP just to make sure I'm not contradicting anything [that was stated] in the RFP, so I'll provide that in the written [call transcript] responses.

Follow-up Answer: The County has stated in the RFP on page 28, item 32c that 'Proposals for vendor and third party professional services are expected to be on a "time and materials, not-to-exceed" basis where the County compensates firms on the basis of hours and expenses incurred up to a ceiling amount.' Therefore a fixed bid would not satisfy this requirement.

21. Question: Is there an expected budget range already for this?

    Answer: I'm not at liberty to share that at this time. But there are funds that have been allocated to this project.

22. Question: I'd just like to ask on the DYL[260, 280]. Have you given any thought where you'd like to bring the DYL in to play on the Windows platform?

    Answer: We'd like to have those converted, potentially to COBOL.

    Comment from vendor: Oh perfect. I won't ask anything more, thank you very much.

23. Question: You mention in there that several Counties have remote, read only access to your CICS system. Can you just mention how that's implemented? I mean do they have access to specific browse-only applications? How are you managing that?

    Clarifying question from County: When you're talking about remote, are you asking about access from outside the County network?

    Answer from vendor: Right. I think its on page 19. It just says 'various County of San Luis Obispo departments and some outside agencies have CICS read-only access …' so maybe it's not remote. I was just looking at them as outside agencies, so maybe I was probably inferring remote in that way. I'm not so much interested the remote as much as much as how you implement the read-only access.

    Answer from County: They have different online transactions that restrict their access.

    Clarifying question from vendor: OK, so it's sort of browse-only applications?

    Answer from County: Yes

    Comment from vendor: OK, that's what I was looking for.

24. Question: If VSAM and SQL data structures have to be converted to MS SQL tables, how many programs would have to be rewritten to accommodate the change in data access?

Answer: We don't know what that [number] is at this point. [Pause] We know that the data access may change but we're looking for some solution so that we don't need to rewrite our programs. There is potential for some minimal amount of rewrite, depending on the solution.

Clarifying question from vendor: OK so if we could maintain VSAM and sequential structure as it is, would that be acceptable?

Answer from County: Yes if it's in SQL.

Clarifying question from vendor: So access in VSAM as VSAM in the emulated mainframe environment is out of scope?

Answer from County: There is a preference not to carry the VSAM with us, yes, to convert those to SQL tables.

25. Question: There's a lot of discussion about test cases and that sort of thing, generating test cases. To what extent do test cases currently exist for the applications? And if there are not test cases, are there runbooks associated with those test cases or those applications?

    Answer: We're currently in the process of identifying those, because we have not had test cases and test scripts in our department. So that process is currently ongoing to develop those. There may be some time to be allocated during the implementation phase to further develop those test cases. It depends on departmental availability from this point to the start of the implementation project. So the goal is to identify as many as possible but we may not complete that process [before implementation]. We intend to provide those.

26. Question: My question is really around the VSAM and the sequential files also. I do see customers asking for VSAM going to SQL or another RDBMS. It's rare to see someone ask that their flat files go to them. The question then is: are these flat files written, opened, read and written with standard COBOL, or are they routed through these I/O modules. Because as you can imagine if we're going to shift the sequential to SQL we're going to have swap out COBOL reads and writes for exec SQL's so it becomes a significant effort if we're having to modify the programs which I understand you and I both don't want to do.

    Answer: We use I/O modules

    Clarifying question from vendor: OK, so reads and writes are by call. That's fine, that's good, actually that's better.

    Answer from County: there are a few system utility programs that actually have file definitions and do direct read and write, but they're a rarity.

    Clarifying question from vendor: OK, so that's a 5% minority then I would say, right?

    Answer from County: Probably not even that.

    Comment from vendor: That's great because then we can mask it. That's fine.

27. Question: 1) So we're looking at the processes for the Auditor/Controller, the Assessor, and the Treasurer-Tax Collector, and then all the other interfacing departments that use these systems. Can you share with us perhaps in your response the other interfacing systems that are going to be impacted by moving everything off the mainframe, so that we can get a sense of the other interfaces that we're going to have to build, and 2) is that a responsibility of the contractor to take care of developing all these other interfaces, and finally inside that do you have a sequencing plan for moving the Auditor/Controller, the Assessor, the Treasurer-Tax Collector – uh, are you expecting them to be done over the same fiscal year, all at once? Do you have any sense of how you'd like to see this being deployed?

    Answer: There is an Appendix F that lists all of our interfaces that are external. Now I don't know if you've looked at that. We are asking in the technical requirements for conversion by the vendor of our interfaces. And the other part of that was just, I'm not sure what the question was in relation to 'all others'. It's basically confined to that list and no other.

    Clarifying answer from vendor: Yes, so that's the extent of it, is that right?

    Answer from County: Yes, that's the extent of it on that list: And then you asked whether the implementation will all be done at one time?

    Clarifying answer from vendor: Yes, my question there is that clearly today you're running all these applications off your mainframe. They're tightly coupled. Now someone's going to move all of this stuff to another platform. And during the course of any property tax cycle you've got events triggering off all over the place between the Assessor, the Auditor/Controller, and the Treasurer. Are you seeing this department by department being deployed, and then if so, are we building bridges back to make sure they have everything in sequence so they're not missing key events that are triggering other events in the other departments?

    Answer from County: No we don't anticipate building any bridges back. We do believe as you state it's all very tightly coupled. We have to basically go live all at one time.

End of call: 11:00 am.